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Going to 2040, Living Downstream and Helping Hackmatack

Posted on 10/20/2010 by Mike Nowak

October 17, 2010

Beyond Burnham: Go To 2040 is launched

You know you're in the middle of a big deal when you walk into the room and not only are 800 people listening respectfully to a speaker, but that speaker happens to be Illinois Senator Dick Durbin. And then you see who else is on stage and among the dignitaries is Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley. Oh, and in the back of the room is a cadre of reporters, complete with a platform lined with cameras. Yep, that's what I call a big deal.

We were all gathered under a tent last Wednesday, October 13, on the **Harris Theater** Rooftop Terrace at Millennium Park for the launch of Go To 2040, the first comprehensive plan for the Chicago region since **Daniel Burnham and Edward** Bennett's historic roadmap was created in 1909. Go To 2040 is the handiwork of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), which was created in 2005 as the comprehensive regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will. There was also business on this day, as the seven counties formally voted to adopt the plan.

To put this entire effort in perspective, imagine bringing 1,226 different units of government into a room to hammer out solutions to increasingly more difficult problems that affect the quality of life in our region. These problems include infrastructure, transportation, water quality, energy use, food systems, open space and more. The idea is for Go To 2040 to serve as a blueprint for coordinating public policies and maximizing increasingly scarce resources in the seven county area.

CMAP Executive Director Randy Blankenhorn was on my show last year, during their "Invent the Future" workshops, when more than 35,000 people weighed in on how they wanted to see the region develop. He is back today to talk about the hard work ahead, as the plan is rolled out, step by crucial step. It doesn't hurt that the day after the Chicago event, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program awarded \$4.25 million to CMAP to spur implementation of the new plan. That's what I call a good start.

We're all "Living Downstream"...and that's not a good thing

I consider it my job to talk about the dangers of the chemicals that have been unleashed

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upon an unsuspecting American public in the past seventy years. But every now and then, I'm reminded of why I do this. A new documentary film that follows Illinois native **Sandra Steingraber**, **Ph.D.** through her journey in dealing with a diagnosis with bladder cancer some thirty years ago hit me in the gut and reaffirmed my conviction that we need to speak out and hold the chemical manufacturers and users of these products accountable, no matter how reasonable they seem to be at first glance.

Living Downstream is based on her book, first published in 1997, which has now been released in a second edition by Da Capo Press. Steingraber is a biologist who was born and raised in Pekin, Illinois. What sets this film apart from other recent environmental films—many of them excellent—is the personal nature of the the message. As both a scientist and cancer survivor, Steingraber is in a unique position to see how our rampant and often unexamined use of industrial and horticultural chemicals—like PCBs and atrazine—has left a legacy of pain and uncertainty in countless lives.

I'm privileged to have both Steingraber and film director **Chanda Chevannes** of The People's Picture Company (The PPC) on the show this morning. They're in the middle of the Illinois Screening tour, which includes these stops:

- Sunday Oct. 17, 1:00 p.m., Normal Theater. Learn more about the VIP event here.
- Sunday Oct. 17, 7:00 p.m., <u>Hoogland Center for the Arts</u>, Springfield
 Advance tickets available online, in person, and by phone from <u>Hoogland Center for the Arts</u> (217) 523-2787. Any remaining tickets will be available at the box office one hour before the screening.
- Monday Oct. 18, 7:00 p.m., <u>Peoria Theater</u>, Peoria. Advance tickets available online, in person, or by phone from the <u>Peoria Theater</u>. Any remaining tickets will be available at the box office one hour before the screening.
- Sandra Steingraber will also be giving a public lecture at the Hansen Student Center of Illinois Wesleyan University on Monday October 18 at 12 noon.
- Tuesday Oct. 19, 7:00 p.m., <u>Museum of Contemporary Art</u>, Chicago
 Advance tickets available online or by phone from <u>Brown Paper Tickets</u>, or in
 person at <u>Women and Children First</u> bookstore. Any remaining tickets available at
 the museum theater thirty minutes before the screening.

The screenings are co-presented by **The Land Connection** & **Pesticide Action Network North America.** Screenings will be followed by a Q&A session with Sandra Steingraber and Chanda Chevannes and a book signing with Sandra Steingraber.

You can help Hackmatack become a National Wildlife Refuge

In 2003 when the <u>U.S. Fish and Wildlife National Wildlife Refuge System</u> celebrated its 100 th anniversary, <u>Audubon Magazine</u> boasted that "a wildlife refuge is located within an hour's drive of every major metropolitan area".

The problem for the nearly 10 million people in the Chicago area is that Audubon got it wrong. The closest refuges— Horicon National Wildlife Refuge located in Mayville, Wisconsin and the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in Savannah, Illinois, are both 150 miles from downtown Chicago. I don't know how fast *you* drive, but I don't think I can get to either place in an hour.

Meanwhile, a group of concerned and environmentally informed citizens in northeastern Illinois and southeastern Wisconsin began working to create a national wildlife refuge in several counties along the Wisconsin and Illinois border not far from both Milwaukee and Chicago. The refuge was to be called *Hackmatack* (from an Algonquin word for the tamarack tree). They called themselves **Friends of Hackmatack** and began lobbying the USFWS to consider the establishment of the refuge.

Cindy Skrukrud is one of those friends, and she's pleased to say that their efforts have paid off...so far. In April of this year, the USFWS announced its intention to conduct a

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- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
- Chicago Recycling Coalition
- Chicago Sustainable Business Alliance
- Chicago Wilderness
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- Cob Connection
- Environmental Law & Policy Center
- Family Farmed.org
- Food & Water Watch
- Friends of the Forest Preserves
- Go To 2040
- Growing Home
- Horticultural Myths (Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott)
- Illinois PIRG
- Lawn Reform Coalition
- Leave No Child Inside
- Midwest Ecological Landscaping Association
- Mighty House Radio Show
- Mother Nature Network
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- NeighborSpace
- OneHistory
- Openlands
- Outside the Loop Radio
- Perennials in Focus
- Peterson Garden Project
- Plant Health Care Report (Morton Arboretum)
- Resource Center
- SafeLawns.org
- Safer Pest Control Project
- Starhill Forest Arboretum
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study to determine if the establishment of a national wildlife refuge would be appropriate. It identified a 350,000 acre study area which includes land in McHenry and Lake counties in Illinois and Walworth, Kenosha and Racine counties in Wisconsin.

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Here's where you come in. The USFWS has established a **website to provide the public with information** about the study process, and where you can ask a question or make a comment. In addition, there are public hearings planned for this week. The Illinois hearings have passed but two open house events are scheduled for this week in Wisconsin:

- Wednesday, Oct. 20, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the Bristol Municipal Building, 19801
 83rd Street, Bristol, Wisconsin
- Thursday, Oct. 21, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the City of Lake Geneva City Hall, 626
 Geneva Street, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

If you believe in this worthy cause, you might want to add your two-or even four-cents' worth to the conversation.

This entry was posted in <u>Information from Past Shows</u> and tagged <u>atrazine</u>, <u>Chicago</u>, <u>CMAP</u>, <u>Daniel Burnham</u>, <u>Go To 2040</u>, <u>Hackmatack</u>, <u>National Wildlife Refuge</u>, <u>Randy Blankenhorn</u>, <u>Sandra Steingraber</u>. Bookmark the <u>permalink</u>.

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